



It's July 31, 2020. In today's issue: Chimney Rock reopens; Digitizing our collections; Was there a North Platte Riot?; National award for Votes for Women; Survive falling down a well; New to National Register of Historic Places; Amelia Earhart's pilot's license; 300th anniversary of Villasur Massacre; Events.

Chimney Rock Museum reopens August 1



The story of the most mentioned landmark on Oregon Trail is ready to be told once again. The Chimney Rock Museum opens its doors Saturday, August 1. We closed the museum last fall for an expansion and major renovation. Visitors of all ages will experience new exhibits and amenities in the expanded space.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, we're not having a grand opening event this year. We'll do something special later. In the meantime, after this weekend the museum will be open Wednesday through Sunday, 10 am – 4 pm. [Keep reading.](#)

We're digitizing our newspaper collection!

By Trevor Jones, Director & CEO

Microfilm makes my eyes hurt. Years ago I used to buy microfilm reels from the National Archives and take the bus across town to visit a friend who owned a microfilm reader. I would sit there pouring over blurry Civil War rosters until my eyes felt like they'd been rubbed with sandpaper. Back then, there wasn't much of a choice. You either went to Washington to look at original documents, or you suffered – scrolling through pages of microfilm to find the one thing you needed.

Digitization has made research much easier and more pleasant. Now I can do in an hour what used to take me days to accomplish, and I can do it from the comfort of my couch. That is why I'm so excited by History Nebraska's new partnership with Newspapers.com to digitize our newspaper collection and make it searchable online. Soon, every visitor to our research room will have

instant digital access to hundreds of Nebraska newspapers, and with a Newspapers.com subscription, they will be accessible from anywhere.

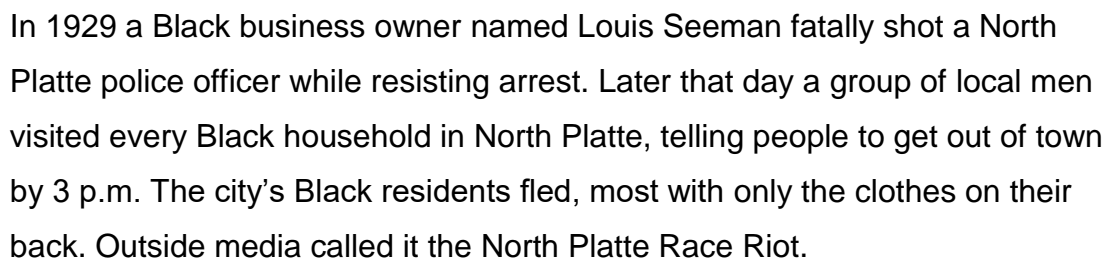
This is just one of many efforts History Nebraska is making to improve access to our collections. Our mission is to “open to all the histories we share.” In today’s COVID-19 world that means a focus on digital resources.

We’re making strides, but we’ve got a long way to go. In 2018, History Nebraska asked LYRASIS, a non-profit organization specializing in helping libraries, archives, and museums, to evaluate our library and reference room operations. The results were discouraging. **They told us we were 10-15 years behind where we should be**, and that many of our collections were difficult to use or even inaccessible.

Fortunately, LYRASIS also provided dozens of recommendations on how to fix these problems. Since then History Nebraska’s Board of Trustees has made digitization their top priority, and we’re working hard to close the gap. Our audacious goal is to put 1,000,000 digital records online this year.

Of course, these efforts take both staff and financial resources, and if you’d like to help, support our work by [becoming a member](#) of History Nebraska. And please consider donating to the [History Nebraska Foundation](#).

We hope you’ll continue to use our online resources, and whenever you’re ready, we’re ready to welcome you in person at our museums and historic sites – especially our renovated museum at Chimney Rock National Historic Site!



Keep reading.

Nebraska History Museum wins national award for *Votes for Women*



The American Association for State and Local History honored History Nebraska with an Award of Excellence for our *Votes for Women* exhibit. The AASLH Leadership in History Awards, now in its 75th year, is the most prestigious recognition for achievement in the preservation and interpretation of state and local history. [Read more.](#)

Did you know that Nebraska could have been the first territory to allow women the vote? The lower house of the territorial legislature passed a bill in 1856...

[Read more.](#)

How to survive falling down a well



F. W. Carlin survived a 143-foot fall down a well, but then he had another problem. Nobody knew he was there, and no one was likely to come looking for him. If he was to make it out alive, he would have to do it on his own.

The photo above shows the digging of a different Custer County well. Well digging was a vital, difficult, and dangerous task on the high plains. Shallow

wells could be dug with an auger, but on tablelands a well might have to go down 100 or even 200 feet. Before hydraulic drilling, sometimes the only way to do it was to go down the hole yourself and have a man to raise and lower the rope.

Professional well-diggers learned their trade by experience. It wasn't just the digging. Sections of a well might also need to be "curbed" with wooden boards to keep them from caving in. There were a lot of ways to die: cave-ins, falling buckets, or asphyxiation from "the damp" (carbon monoxide).

Abandoned wells could be dangerous too, as Mr. Carlin discovered. [Did he make it out?](#)

What are we doing with Amelia Earhart's pilot's license?



Famed aviator Amelia Earhart wasn't a Nebraskan, but such is the reputation of History Nebraska's Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center that its conservators work on objects from many out-of-state collections.

Earhart's "sporting" (as opposed to commercial) pilot's license from 1928 was in bad shape when it arrived at the Ford Center. [Keep reading.](#)

Four Nebraska locations added to National Register of Historic Places



The National Register's new Nebraska listings include two properties and two historic districts: the A.B. Fuller House in **Decatur**, St. Patrick's Catholic Church

in **O'Neill**, the **North Platte** Commercial Historic District, and Little Bohemia Neighborhood in **Omaha**.

The Fuller House was built by the same man who built most of Decatur's first buildings; it now houses the Decatur Museum. St. Patrick's Church was only two years old when Father Edward J. Flanagan (later of Boys Town fame) served his first parish assignment there in 1912. The North Platte Commercial District keeps improving; a recent renovation project removed 1980s metal canopies from storefronts to return to a more historic look. Omaha's Little Bohemia is one of the city's nineteenth century ethnic neighborhoods. See pictures and [read more](#).

August 14 is the 300th anniversary of the Villasur Massacre



Last year we posted four Nebraska images and asked you to guess which was the oldest. The winner, shown above, was a hide painting of the Villasur Massacre, the earliest known picture of a Nebraska event. A full-size replica is on exhibit at the Nebraska History Museum.

On the morning of August 14, 1720, Pawnees and Otoes attacked a group of Spanish soldiers near present-day Columbus. This is partly a story of national rivalries. Spain, France, and Britain were jockeying for position in North

America. Each wanted to control the valuable fur trade, while Native tribes sought to protect their own economic interests. [Keep reading.](#)



Whatever is on your summer reading list, there's a level of security in knowing that you can probably find what you need at your local library. But at the turn of the 20th century, not everyone had that option available. Click the photo to read more.

Upcoming events

We've scheduled four August dates each for the "Time Machine of Fun" (featuring a World War II theme) and for "Mad Science at the Museum." A second "Pedaling Suffrage" bike tour is scheduled for August 1, but check the

events page to see if spots are still available – the first one sold out! [Keep reading.](#)



This email was written by David Bristow, Editor, and Josh Lottman,
history.nebraska.gov

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[unsubscribe from this list](#).

Complete articles:

Chimney Rock Museum Reopening August 1st



The story of the most mentioned landmark on Oregon Trail is ready to be told once again as History Nebraska announces that Chimney Rock Museum will open their doors Saturday, August 1st. The museum has been closed for remodeling and renovation work since late 2019.

Visitors to the museum will see many new amenities and features, including new exhibits, a newly expanded education room for school programs, new theater space, improved gift shop, and the addition of new space to act as a storm shelter. Trevor Jones, History Nebraska director and CEO, says he is excited for visitors to

see the new museum. “Pioneer history cannot be told without including the westward trails, Chimney Rock, and the Nebraska landscape. We are excited for our visitors to experience the new exhibits and learn more about Nebraska’s iconic landmark.”

Last updated in 1994, the Chimney Rock Museum will include unique opportunities for visitors to learn about the site’s history. “One of the new additions to our exhibit space is a soundscape where our guests will hear quotes journaled by Oregon Trail travelers as they made their way towards Chimney Rock. It brings the history of these people to life,” says Jessica Strube, History Nebraska exhibits coordinator. “We are also excited about the new interactive displays and photo viewers where guests can see historical images in 3D.”

Following this weekend, Chimney Rock Museum will be open Wednesday through Sunday, 10 am – 4 pm. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a grand opening event will be tentatively scheduled in 2021. [Click here for more information.](#)

New Exhibit Photos







July 30, 2020

Someone called us out on Twitter about an article we published in 1979....

No, wait. This is worth your time. Yes, people complain about everything on social media, but sometimes they have a point. Reading history with a critical eye is part of thinking like a historian.

Consider this story:

In 1929 a Black business owner named Louis Seeman fatally shot a North Platte police officer while resisting arrest. Soon a group of police, firemen, and National

Guardsmen surrounded the house where Seeman was hiding. They threw flaming rags into the house to smoke him out of the attic, and then found Seeman hiding in a crawlspace under the ground floor. They claimed that Seeman shot himself when he was discovered.

Later that day a group of local men visited every Black household in North Platte, telling people to get out of town by 3 p.m. The city's Black residents fled, most with only the clothes on their back. Outside media called it the North Platte Race Riot.

But recently, when University of Nebraska-Lincoln sociology PhD student Grace Kelly read a 1979 **Nebraska History** article about the incident, she objected to the historian's interpretation in this **Twitter thread**:



Grace Kelly @gkelly213 · 10h

Replying to @gkelly213

TLDR: black man killed a police officer while resisting arrest. Group of respected townsmen set him on fire & he was shot to death, then they went to every black household in town, threatening them if they didn't leave before 3pm- all black people "evicted" from North Platte!



1



3



Grace Kelly @gkelly213 · 10h

Now, that's the basic story from the gov site, as well as a few other sources (such as calendar.eji.org/racial-injusti...) tell. However, the interesting thing is that the government NSHS article STRONGLY argues that this was NOT a riot...

NORTH PLATTE IS QUIET AGAIN AFTER NEGROES' EXODUS

July 13th, 1929 | A History of Racial Injustice

On this day, a white mob forced 200 black residents out of North Platte, Nebraska.

calendar.eji.org



1



3





Grace Kelly @gkelly213 · 10h

Of course, being who I am, I decided to read the full 20+ page report, ESPECIALLY after seeing that the author's intent was to say that this event was sensationalized and definitely NOT a riot!

And of course, since it was the "official" source we always strive for 😂😏



1



3



Grace Kelly @gkelly213 · 10h

The author's first argument against this being a mob/riot is: "The size of the crowd. OMA & LNK papers reported that the crowd numbered in the 1000s. Eyewitnesses say that the crowd may have included several hundred persons."

Mobs/riots must exceed 999+, I guess 😏



1



3



Grace Kelly @gkelly213 · 9h

This crowd was "puzzled, watchful & solemn"

The victim's "body was not dragged behind a car through the streets until it fell apart"

He just had flaming "rags saturated w formaldehyde" thrown at him, got shot & men "poured gasoline over his position & ignited it"

No mob there!



1



3



Grace Kelly @gkelly213 · 9h

"The official state report said that police & officers of the National Guard 'saw no evidence of a riot or undue disturbance to that time or until after the bodies were removed. In fact they saw no disturbance.'"

^I'll just let everyone judge that quote as they want



1



3





Grace Kelly @gkelly213 · 9h

Allegedly, the author "found no evidence of physical violence, but determined that a group of men and boys had gone from residence to residence telling blacks, "N----- be gone by 3 o'clock and we don't "mean maybe."

Certainly, NOT a mob.



1



3



Grace Kelly @gkelly213 · 9h

The author's view is substantiated by a very nice quote he provides directly from the Klan: "Not one of those colored folks was harmed in any way. They just got a little scare that will make them better citizens and teach them law and order."



1



3



Grace Kelly @gkelly213 · 9h

Continued: "The Klan boys in Lincoln County (North Platte) will clean up that community and clean it up right if they are let alone."

If the Klan says it, it must be true! As the article continues: "This talk about Mob Violence is all Bunk, pure and simple"



1



3



Grace Kelly @gkelly213 · 9h

To end the article (which is published by NSHS and the Nebraska government website), the author doubles down: "Finally, there was no race riot or mob violence. There was no race riot in North Platte, Nebraska, on July 13, 1929."

So, my fellow Nebraskans. You decide. 🤔👤



1

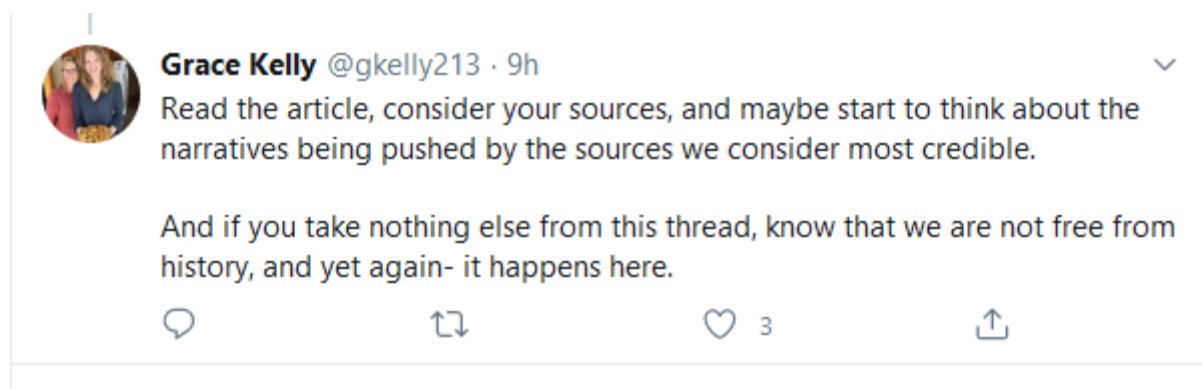


1



3





Kelly tagged History Nebraska in another tweet, suggesting that we publish something new on the subject. “There is TONS of great info in the article—but the whole slant is to PROVE it was NOT a riot,” she wrote.

* * *

What’s going on here? Why did a historian make this particular argument?

First, let’s talk about point of view.

Some people say that historians should present “just the facts.” Readers don’t necessarily care about the author’s opinions. They want to make up their own minds.

But history always involves some degree of interpretation. The historian has to select which stories to tell, which details to cite, and then structure those details into a coherent narrative—a subjective process that involves countless interpretive choices.

That doesn’t mean anything goes. We judge works of history by how well they use sources and how plausibly they interpret them. But the savvy reader knows that every historian—no matter how much they try to be fair and objective—has a point

of view. Savvy readers treat historical writing less like an authoritative text and more like a conversation with an author. They check endnotes and ask questions.

So what is this article's point of view? The author is a history graduate student who went on to become an attorney. He values precise, legalistic definitions. He distinguishes "acts of force" from "acts of violence," and defines a riot as an "offense against the public order involving three or more people and the use of violence, however slight." He then argues that North Platte's Black residents left town after a group of men told them to get out of town by 3 p.m., but that there was no physical violence against them.

"This interpretation is by no means intended to lessen the gravity of what did occur," the author writes, "but it is a clarification of what has become a distorted view of the incident, a view that originated at least partially in sensationalized newspaper stories...."

In 1976 the author interviewed eleven surviving witnesses. The witnesses, White and Black, reported no acts of violence after Seeman's death. In the author's judgment, this combined testimony 47 years later is more reliable than the 1929 stories written by out-of-town reporters. Near the end of the article, he writes:

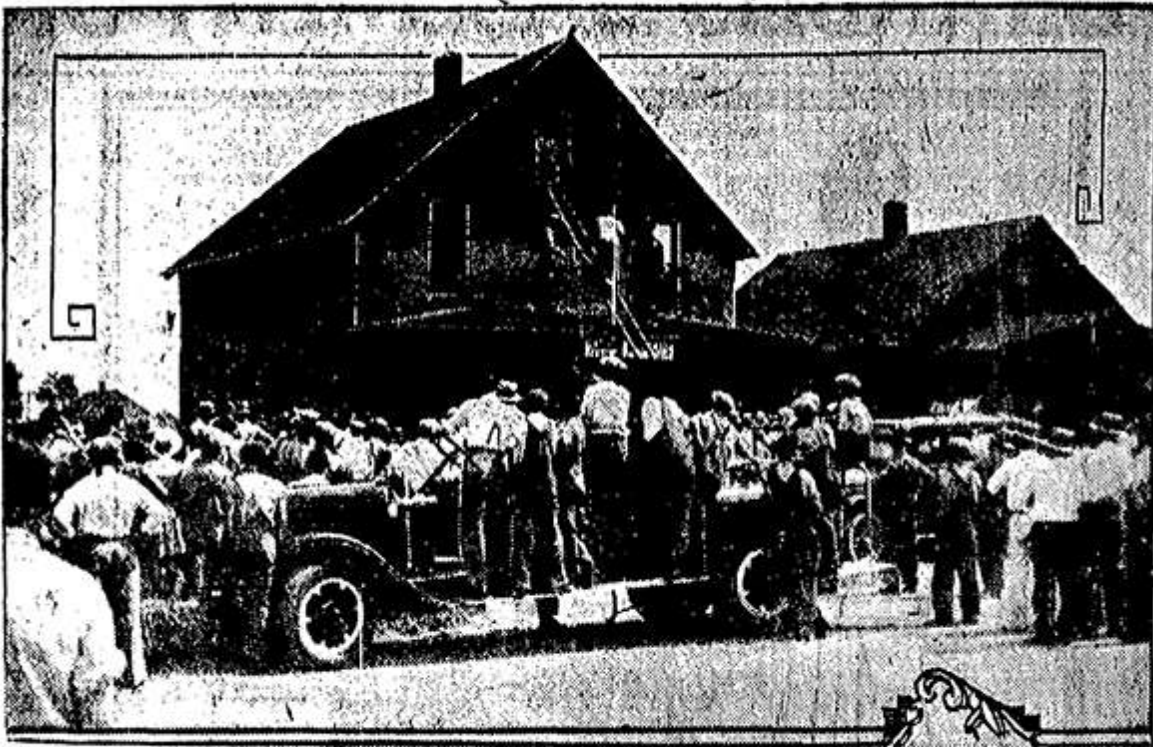
"There is no evidence of any real violence to North Platte's black population, but there were implied threats. These threats were themselves deplorable."

The author main goals are to establish what happened and to decide how we should label the event. He titles his article "North Platte Racial Incident: Black-White Confrontation, 1929."

Kelly's tweets imply that the author agrees with the Klan's assessment ("just a little scare that will make them better citizens"), but in fact the author says he doesn't want to "lessen the gravity" of what he calls a "deplorable" incident.

But the author goes on to say something that I'll come back to later. Explaining that the action appears to have been spontaneous, he concludes that it "*was not the result of any long-term or deeply-rooted race hatred...*" (emphasis added).

Scene of 'North Platte Double Killing



Above is a picture of the mob which gathered Saturday around the home of Louis Seeman, Negro, in North Platte, after Seeman had shot and killed Ed Green, police officer. Seeman killed himself after the authorities set fire to the house. Following this, North Platte Negroes were ordered to leave town.

Omaha World-Herald, July 16, 1929.

* * *

This brings us to an important lesson about “difficult history.” Notice that Kelly doesn’t dispute the author’s factual claims. She objects to his interpretation.

We’re hearing a lot these days about America’s racial history. Sometimes people argue about the facts, but most disputes are about interpretation. How much weight should we give to some parts of the story over others?

Consider the North Platte incident. From the perspective of 1929 city leaders, the main story was that big-city newspapers unfairly damaged the town's reputation with exaggerated stories. No one was hurt, except a man who murdered a police officer, and Black residents soon returned to their homes. In this view, the accuracy of words such as "riot," "mob," and "violence" are of primary importance.

But from the (presumed) perspective of North Platte's Black residents, the main issue was "Am I going to be lynched?" and "Will North Platte be another **Omaha**, another **Tulsa**, another **Rosewood**?" From this perspective, it was irrelevant whether the White men going door to door were properly a "mob" that was "rioting." People fled because they knew they could be killed with impunity.

Notice that the author makes no mention of any Black resident calling the police for help—because why would they? Black people were bound by the law but not protected by it. The opposite was true for the White people who threatened them. Afterwards some of the White men boasted that no jury would convict them, and sure enough, the handful who faced misdemeanor charges were acquitted after a jury deliberated all of ten minutes.

To me, what is striking about the article is not that it justifies what happened—it doesn't—but that despite being grounded in thorough research and attention to detail, it assumes the priorities and interpretive framework of North Platte's White leadership. This shapes the entire narrative, including the author's astonishing conclusion that the incident was "not the result of any long-term or deeply-rooted race hatred."

* * *

In her tweets, Grace Kelly emphasizes that History Nebraska is a government agency and an official source of state history. In multiple senses, we own that 1979 article.

This is something we think about too. We've been publishing *Nebraska History* magazine for more than 100 years, and we're gradually **posting back issues online as free PDFs**. It's not an empty boast to call it the best single source of Nebraska history anywhere online. But each article is written from somebody's limited perspective, and the passage of time has a way of revealing our blind spots.

The 1979 article remains online, now linked to this post. The next part is up to you. **Read the article**. What do you make of the author's interpretation? Do you agree with Kelly's summary and critique? Are my comments helpful, or do I miss the mark? How might your own identity and background shape your interpretation of events? Who else might have a different perspective?

How to Survive Falling Down a Well



F. W. Carlin survived a 143-foot fall down a well, but then he had another problem. Nobody knew he was there, and no one was likely to come looking for him. If he was to make it out alive, he would have to do it on his own.

The photo above shows the digging of a different Custer County well. Well digging was a vital, difficult, and dangerous task on the high plains. Shallow wells could be dug with an auger, but on tablelands a well might have to go down 100 or even 200 feet. Before hydraulic drilling, sometimes the only way to do it was to go down the hole yourself and have a man to raise and lower the rope.

Professional well-diggers learned their trade by experience. It wasn't just the digging. Sections of a well might also need to be "curbed" with wooden boards to keep them from caving in. There were a lot of ways to die: cave-ins, falling buckets, or asphyxiation from "the damp" (carbon monoxide).

Abandoned wells could be dangerous too, as Mr. Carlin discovered in 1895. Did he make it out? Here's the full story, as told by historian Everett Dick in *Conquering the Great American Desert*, published by the Nebraska State Historical Society (aka History Nebraska) in 1975:

"The danger from these deep wells was not confined to well diggers and those who went down to repair curb or water-raising equipment. After the great exodus of settlers from western Nebraska in the 1890's, vast expanses of the country lay unoccupied. Many homesteaders had either abandoned their claims, allowing them to revert to the government, or had mortgaged them to Eastern loan companies which left their Nebraska property unoccupied. This meant hundreds of old, deteriorating wells remain on these abandoned claims—an invitation to disaster to someone who might by chance fall in one. The best-known instance of such an accident was that of F. W. Carlin, which is widely known in Nebraska history. While Carlin was on business fifteen miles north of Broken Bow late in the evening, he inadvertently took the wrong road, which led to some old sod buildings. When one of his horses stopped, Carlin got out of the buggy and walked along beside it to see what was the matter. In the twilight he stepped into one of these unused wells.

“A well man himself, Carlin immediately realized his predicament. Placing his feet together, he uttered a prayer: ‘Oh God have mercy on my soul!’ When he struck the water 143 feet below, he was stunned, a rib broken, and an ankle painfully sprained, but the water was only chest deep. On examination he found that it was a square well curbed with wood; and by sheer nerve, indomitable will, and ingenuity, he was able to whittle footholds with a pocket knife and otherwise devise means of scaling the difficult walls. After two days and nights of effort, he reached the top where he grasped some large sunflower stalks, pulled himself out, and lay exhausted on the ground for a time. Then he knelt and thanked God for his deliverance. With a sprained ankle and a broken rib, he could not walk, but crawled painfully toward the only house in the whole country, a mile and a half distant. Famished, he pulled seed pods off wild rose plants along the road and ate the red meat as he inched his way along to the house, where he found help.” (p. 106)

Professor Dick says that the incident prompted the state legislature to pass a law requiring owners of abandoned land to find these wells and fill them. Not only did this remove a hazard, but it also provided employment for the poverty-stricken settlers who remained.

(Photo: "Mr. Moyer digging a well in east Custer County, Nebraska," by Solomon D. Butcher, 1886. History Nebraska RG 2608-0-2207-a)

(Posted 7/28/2020)

Cleaning Amelia Earhart's Sporting License

Working in a conservation lab can be quite satisfying for two reasons. The first, and most important, is being able to preserve unique items that hold historic or personal value so that they can be shared with future generations. The second is that we get to touch history. Handling an object that an historical figure handled is a humbling experience.



Earhart's License Before Treatment, front and back.

One such object is the sporting license granted to Amelia Earhart in 1928. It was issued by the National Aeronautic Association of the United States. Not only was it signed by Ms. Earhart herself, but it is also signed by Orville Wright, the Chairman of the N.A.A., and one of the Wright Brothers who helped design the first airplane.

The license is in the collection of the Harry S Truman Library. It's a simple license printed on blue cardstock. The photograph of Earhart appears to be clipped from a magazine as it's on coated paper with text on the back. The license was filled out on a typewriter and handwritten blue ink.

The license was in fair condition. There was a tear and part of the paper was lifting where it had been attached to something previously. The license was also disfigured by a dark brown adhesive that had hardened over the years.



The translucent block at the top of the image is a small piece of gellan gum. That gum acts as a poultice which can draw up the stain in the paper while limiting moisture.

To treat the license, it was lightly surface cleaned to remove any soiling. The paper, print inks, and handwritten inks were tested with solvents to determine their solubility. All the inks proved stable for the purpose of reducing the dark staining. The adhesive residues and staining were initially reduced by gently scraping the top layer of paper with a scalpel blade to remove the darkest discoloration. This was fairly effective and allowed for better local washing results. The license was then locally washed using suction to help draw the staining out.

Many of the stained areas required a poultice material called gellan gum, which helped to leach out more of the discolored adhesive than water washing alone could do. The gellan gum poultice was cut to the appropriate shape and placed on top of areas of staining. The poultice was left for periods of 5 to 15 minutes. The area was then cleared with deionized water on a suction platen. This method proved successful for stain reduction. Because the paper was deeply stained, some discoloration will always be visible.

Next, the license was humidified and flattened under a weight. And the small tears and creases around the margins were repaired and the photograph secured using appropriate adhesives.

Finally, a custom Mylar L-sleeve was provided so the license can be easily handled and safely accessed.



Earhart License after treatment. Note the stain reduction on the front and back.

Whether we're polishing Harry Truman's boots or cleaning Amelia Earhart's aviation license, it is always rewarding to hold history in your hands.

Four Nebraska Locations Added to National Register of Historic Places



History Nebraska is pleased to announce that four locations have been recently added to the [National Register of Historic Places](#). The A.B. Fuller House in Decatur, St. Patrick's Catholic Church in O'Neill, North Platte Commercial Historic District, and Little Bohemia Neighborhood in Omaha were all considered and selected by the National Parks Service for listing.

A.B. Fuller House



When the Decatur Museum Board purchased the A.B. Fuller House in 2006, they immediately began work to save a building whose historic legacy was in jeopardy. Using a single black-and-white photograph for reference, they were able to rebuild its original support columns and cupola and restore it to its former grandeur. Now their hard work has culminated in a place on the National Register.

The building now houses the Decatur Museum, where visitors can see its original brickwork, which was kilned by Azariah Bemis Fuller when he built it in 1875. Fuller built the house in the Italianate style, which was typical for prominent and successful politicians or business people throughout Nebraska's early statehood. A.B. Fuller certainly earned his position of prominence—he built most of Decatur's first buildings, operated a hotel, a sawmill, and was briefly involved in organizing a coal mining company.

David Calease of our [State Historic Preservation Office](#) notes the importance of Fuller and his home to Decatur's history. "He oversaw the building of a large number of buildings in Decatur and the surrounding area and had an impact on establishing the community," says Calease. "The Decatur Historical Museum has done a great job of renovating the house back to its historic appearance following a period as a duplex."

St. Patrick's Catholic Church



Very few changes have been made to St. Patrick's Catholic Church since it was built in 1910. Generations of families have sat on the original hardwood pews and looked up at the brilliant stained glass windows which were imported from Germany.

Father Starman, pastor of St. Patrick's, believes that the designation of the church on the National Register will help the parishioners of Saint Patrick's. "This designation will help them to further realize the historical significance of our parish

in O'Neill and in the state, which gives the opportunity to redouble our efforts to be the 'voice' of Jesus Christ to all who live and travel through our community." Father Starman describes the church as a symbol of history, longevity, faithfulness, community, sharing, strength, hope, security, and presence.

Built out of brick, wood, and natural stone, St. Patrick's features two towers, a large rose window, and a 4000-pound bell purchased from the McShane Bell Foundry of Maryland in 1886. The medieval-style stained glass windows are of excellent quality. The windows on the West all illustrate events in the life of Christ, while those on the east wall are Irish, German, and Polish saints, reflecting the ethnic diversity of the early settlers. Also, of note, Father Edward J. Flanagan served his first parish assignment at St. Patrick's Church in 1912. Father Flanagan is best known as the founder of Boys Town, which was recognized as a National Historic Landmark in 1985.

David Calease from our [State Historic Preservation Office](#) describes the building as central to O'Neill's history and heritage. "The beautiful stained glass windows throughout the building really stand out."

North Platte Commercial Historic District



Downtown North Platte certainly reflects the community's pride in its history. The original 1917 brick streets have been restored, and a recent renovation project removed 1980s era metal canopies from storefronts.

Renae Brandt started this project after she worked on renovating the second floor of the historic Dixon Building. She is hopeful that the new historic district will encourage investment and renovation. "We have already seen many façade improvements, and the tax credits available may give an incentive to complete large building renovations," says Brandt. She also sees the nomination as an opportunity to tell their story as a community. "The downtown area represents the history of The North Platte Canteen, the UPRR, and the many businesses and people that helped to shape our community."

The historic district encompasses approximately twelve blocks. The rough boundaries are 4th Street on the south, Front Street to the North, Vine Street on the west, and Chestnut Street on the east. The north side is roughly located between 7th and 9th Streets, from Vine Street to Dewey Street. The 60 contributing properties located within these boundaries may be eligible for historic tax credits that can be applied to rehabilitation projects.

David Calease from our [State Historic Preservation Office](#) says that this is a unique historic district. "It consists of two separate areas, divided by the railroad tracks," says Calease. "The two areas are intricately linked as both were vital to establishing and sustaining North Platte's commercial success. There is a lot of excitement in North Platte for its downtown areas, and we feel that the historic district and the financial incentives it provides can be a great asset to the community moving forward."

Little Bohemia Neighborhood



In the early twentieth century, nearly all Czechs living in Omaha lived in the Little Bohemia neighborhood, or as it was alternately called Praha or Bohemia Town. Most of the buildings in this area are still around today despite being built between 1885 and 1900.

The unique interspersing of residential and commercial properties reflects the live/work atmosphere of the Czech community. The Czech community enjoyed socializing and often drinking and brewing beer. Beer gardens, taverns, and bars were common in the district. In response to widespread anti-foreign sentiment following WWI, the Czech culture in many small towns across Nebraska began to fade noticeably. As a result, people would seek out the Little Bohemia neighborhood for restaurants, taverns, and tastes of their Czech culture.

David Calease from our [State Historic Preservation Office](#) sees a bright future for this area. "This area is undergoing a resurgence, and there are people who want to make sure historic preservation is a part of this neighborhood's future to help it retain key aspects of its rich history."

The 40 contributing buildings in this district are now all potentially eligible for historic tax credits that can be applied to rehabilitation projects. The boundaries of the area are roughly South 13th Street from Hickory Street to one block north of William Street.

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's inventory of properties deemed worthy of preservation. It is part of a national program to coordinate and support local and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect the nation's historic and archeological resources. The National Register was developed to recognize historic places and their role in contributing to our country's heritage. Properties listed in the National Register either individually or as contributing to a historic district are eligible for State and Federal tax incentives. For more information on the National Register program in Nebraska check out the resources and information available from our [**Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office**](#).